

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): An image processing method of processing ~~an~~ image data using an image file, the image file including the image data and image processing control information to be used ~~for processing to process~~ the image data, ~~the image processing control information including light metering information showing whether a specific metering method measuring light in specified field of view is used to photograph the image data, the specified field of view being a part of an image expressed by the image data,~~ the method comprising the steps of:

- (a) determining a degree of auto adjustment ~~for adjusting to adjust~~ lightness and contrast of the image data according to lightness of ~~a whole image expressed by~~ the image data, ~~based on the image processing control information, the degree of the auto adjustment being reduced when the light metering information shows that the specific metering method is used for the photographing;~~ and
- (b) performing the auto adjustment based on the determination.

Claim 2 (Canceled).

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The image processing method in accordance with claim 2 1, wherein,

the light metering information represents a selected one among a plurality of metering methods including averaged metering, center-weighted metering, spot metering, multi-spot metering, divisional light metering, and partial light metering, and

the specific metering methods include the spot metering, the multi-spot metering, and the partial metering.

Claim 4 (Original): The image processing method in accordance with claim 3, wherein,

the step (a) includes the step of providing a user with a user interface to allow the user to select the degree of the auto adjustment when the image processing control information indicates the center-weighted metering.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): An image processing method of processing ~~an~~ image data using an image file, the image file including the image data and image processing control information to be used ~~for processing to process~~ the image data, the image processing control information including light metering information showing whether a specific metering method measuring light in a specified field of view is used to photograph the image data, the specified field of view being a part of an image expressed by the image data, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) selecting one of a plurality of adjustment modes according to the image processing control information, the selecting of one of the plurality of adjustment modes including reducing a degree of auto adjustment when the light metering information shows that the specific metering method is used for the photographing; and

(b) automatically adjusting lightness of the image data in the selected adjustment mode according to lightness of ~~a whole image expressed by~~ the image data,

wherein the plurality of adjustment modes include a plurality of adjustment modes having a difference in at least one of a degree of lightness adjustment and a degree of contrast adjustment.

Claim 6 (Canceled).

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): The image processing method in accordance with claim 6 5, wherein,

the light metering information represents a selected one among a plurality of metering methods including averaged metering, center-weighted metering, spot metering, multi-spot metering, divisional light metering, and partial light metering, and

the specific metering methods include the spot metering, the multi-spot metering, and the partial metering.

Claim 8 (Original): The image processing method in accordance with claim 7, wherein,

the step (a) includes the step of providing a user with a user interface to allow the user to select the degree of the auto adjustment when the image processing control information indicates the center-weighted metering.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): An image output method of outputting image data in response to an image file, the image file including the image data and image processing control information to be used ~~for image processing of~~ ~~to process~~ the image data, ~~the image processing control information including light metering information showing whether a specific metering method measuring light in a specified field of view is used to photograph the image data, the specified field of view being a part of an image expressed by the image data,~~ the image output method comprising:

the steps included in the image processing method in accordance with claim 1; and
the step of outputting an image in response to the image-processed image data.

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): A computer-readable medium storing a computer program for causing a computer to process ~~an~~ image data using an image file, the image file including the image data and image processing control information to be used ~~for processing~~ ~~to process~~ the image data, ~~the image processing control information including light metering information showing whether a specific metering method measuring light in a specified field of view is used to photograph the image data, the specified field of view being a part of an image expressed by the image data,~~ the computer program comprising programs causing the computer to perform:

a function to determine a degree of an auto adjustment for adjusting lightness and contrast of the image data according to lightness of ~~a whole image expressed by the image data, based on the image processing control information, the degree of the auto adjustment being reduced when the light metering information shows that the specific metering method is used for the photographing;~~ and

a function to perform the auto adjustment based on the determination.

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): A computer-readable medium storing a computer program for causing a computer to process ~~an~~ image data using an image file, the image file including the image data and image processing control information to be used ~~for processing to process~~ the image data, the image processing control information including light metering information showing whether a specific metering method measuring light in a specified field of view is used to photograph the image data, the specified field of view being a part of an image expressed by the image data, the computer program comprising programs causing the computer to perform:

 a function to automatically adjust lightness of the image data according to lightness of ~~a whole image expressed by~~ the image data in one of a plurality of adjustment modes; and

 a function to select one of the plurality of adjustment modes according to the image processing control information, the function to select one of the plurality of adjustment modes including reducing a degree of auto adjustment when the light metering information shows that the specific metering method is used for the photographing;

 wherein the plurality of adjustment modes include a plurality of adjustment modes having a difference in at least one of a degree of lightness adjustment and a degree of contrast adjustment.

Claim 12 (Currently Amended): An image processing apparatus for processing ~~an~~ image data using an image file, the image file including the image data and image processing control information to be used ~~for processing to process~~ the image data, the image processing control information including light metering information showing whether a specific metering method measuring light in a specified field of view is used to photograph the image data, the specified field of view being a part of an image expressed by the image data, the apparatus comprises comprising:

 an automatic picture quality adjuster configured to automatically regulate lightness and contrast of the image data according to lightness of ~~a whole image expressed by~~ the image data; and

 an adjustment degree determiner configured to determine a degree of the auto adjustment based on the image processing control information, the adjustment degree determiner being further configured to reduce the degree of the auto adjustment when the light metering information shows that the specific metering method is used for the photographing.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): An image processing apparatus for processing ~~an~~ image data using an image file, the image file including the image data and image processing control information to be used ~~for processing to process~~ the image data, the image processing control information including light metering information showing whether a specific metering method measuring light in a specified field of view is used to photograph the image data, the specified field of view being a part of an image expressed by the image data, the apparatus comprises comprising:

an automatic picture quality adjuster configured to automatically adjust lightness of the image data according to lightness of ~~a whole image expressed by~~ the image data in one of a plurality of adjustment modes; and

an adjustment mode selector configured to select one of the plurality of adjustment modes according to the image processing control information, the adjustment mode selector being further configured to reduce a degree of auto adjustment when the light metering information shows that the specific metering method is used for the photographing;

wherein the plurality of adjustment modes include a plurality of adjustment modes having a difference in at least one of a degree of lightness adjustment and a degree of contrast adjustment.